The Problem

• 550,000 Virginians without broadband
• Primary problem is the economics of the infrastructure to serve these areas
• Impetus to solve the problem comes from many angles
  • Economic
  • Social/political
  • Moral

• Governor set bold goal of universal access by 2028
Economic Impact

• According to an Amazon/US Chamber of Commerce Study, increased connectivity will impact Virginia’s rural economic growth tremendously. They estimate:
  • $2.24 billion increased annual sales
  • $1.29 billion annual value added
  • 9,415 added jobs
  • $452.4 million in annual wages

• According to a 2019 USDA study, if broadband and precision agriculture tools were ubiquitous, the U.S. could realize economic benefits of 18 percent of total production. For Virginia, 18% would be equivalent to a $16.3 billion increase in VA Agriculture and Forestry output.
The Plan

• Proceeding along three tracks:
  1. Direct grants to public private partnerships to “make the math work”
  2. Policy changes
  3. Local planning support

• All supported by over 120 members of Commonwealth Connect Coalition
Grant Programs

• VATI – Virginia Telecommunication Initiative
  • Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) grant program for public-private partnership to help supplement broadband deployment costs when extending service to areas that are presently unserved by any broadband provider

• TRRC LMB – Tobacco Commission’s Last-Mile Broadband Program
  • One-time financial assistance to supplement construction costs by private sector broadband service providers, in partnership with local units of government, to extend service to areas that presently are unserved by any broadband provider.
Grant Programs: VATI

• Provide financial assistance to supplement construction costs by private sector providers to extend services to areas that are presently unserved by any broadband provider.

• FY2021 proposed at level funding of $19 million

• Applicant must be a unit of local government with a private internet service provider partner
Grant Programs: VATIC

• “Unserved” is defined as having access to broadband speeds of 25Mbps per second download/3Mbps per second upload or less

• Technical Assistance from VATIC staff available

• Timeline:
  • June 9 - VATIC How to Apply Webinar
  • July 13 - Deadline for VATIC Notice of Application
  • August 17 - VATIC Application Deadline
2017-2020 Progress

- **53,254** Virginia residents, businesses and community anchors will have access to broadband
- **$25 million** awarded to 31 projects across 29 localities
- **100** applications received; **$61.4 million** in requests
*In some circumstances, localities have received awards for more than one year. The color for each reflects the most recent year for which an award was made. For details on localities that received awards for more than one year, please contact DHCD staff.
Broadband Legislation

HB 2691
• Utility leverage program which will allow Dominion and AEP to build and lease excess fiber to internet service providers (ISPs) during their grid modernization.
• Adding more middle-mile fiber throughout the state will increase competition and improve economics for ISPs.

HB 2141
• Legislation allows localities and sub-localities to become special service districts for the purposes of broadband.
• Allows especially neighborhoods and communities to “self-help” or raise their own taxes to finance broadband infrastructure.
Local Planning Support

- Contains:
  - Step-by-step guide
  - Model Solicitation
  - Example Solicitations from Virginia localities
  - FAQs, Potential Pitfalls, and Benefits of Broadband
Welcome! Since you've downloaded this document, you were able to find your way online, but there may be others in your community who aren't as fortunate. The Commonwealth of Virginia's broadband team wants to support your efforts to bring broadband connections to the residents of your community or region. We hope this document is comprehensive, but if you have any issues or questions – however small – please don’t hesitate to reach out to us directly.

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LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING:

What am I looking at right now?

This is a step-by-step guide designed by the Commonwealth of Virginia's broadband team to explain why and how to get everyone in your community or region access to broadband, or high-speed internet. The guide is designed for local leaders, whether they be local elected, business or concerned citizens, who will work with local governments and internet service providers to bring universal access to broadband.
Thank You!

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